Metamorphosis at the Mughal Court

Jessica Keating

In 1620 the artist Abul' Hasan (1589–*c.* 1630) painted the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1569–1627) receiving the Safavid Shah 'Abbas I (1571–1629) (*plate 1*). Currently, in the Freer Gallery of Art, this painting is entitled *Jahangir entertains Abbas*.[1] In this fantastical image – for the two rulers never met – Jahangir and Abbas are accompanied by two attendants and surrounded by objects exogenous to the Mughal court. Among these exotic objects is a seventeenth-century German clockwork automaton of the Roman goddess Diana riding a stag (*plate 2*). This essay explores the *Diana Automaton* (*plate 3*), a type produced in numbers in Northern Europe during the seventeenth century, and the potential ways one of these objects may have arrived at the Mughal court. I hope to show that an examination of the *Diana Automaton*, its movement across space and time, and its translation and appropriation in a painted image in Mughal India, offers an opportunity to propose a new and fruitful way of thinking about objects that, as a result of their cross-cultural mobility, accrued different functions and different values. In other words, I aim to advance an alternative metaphor for 'hybrid' objects.

My engagement with the term 'hybridity' relates to how it has been used to describe objects that cross cultural borders, as well as the novel cultural forms that developed as the result of these objects' adaptation and assimilation in places beyond their point of origin. The goal of this brief essay is not to question that cultural translation or its mechanisms exist, or that cultures changed as a result, but instead to consider these adaptations to be 'metamorphic' rather than hybrid. Metamorphosis – the transformation of one thing into another through space and time – brings to the fore and accentuates the crucial temporal, spatial, transitional, and generative dimensions of cross-cultural exchange. As I hope to show, by placing emphasis on the whole over the halved, mobility over rest, and mutability over constancy, metamorphosis has the potential to reverse some implicit and problematic principles of hybridity as a concept. It is not just that an object exists as multiple things at the same time, but in doing so, that it has transformed into something different from the sum of its parts.

Detail from Attributed to Joachim Friess, *Diana Automaton*, c. 1610 (*plate 3*).

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Objects that Move

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, self-propelled mimetic objects like the *Diana Automaton* were designated *Uhrwerke* (clockworks) in the German-speaking world. Scholars and curators now fall back on the Greek term 'automata', the plural of 'automaton', which means 'acting of one's own will'. These automata set a variety of figures and events in motion. In some cases an entire scene would be animated atop a static base, while in others a single figure or a group of figures would traverse

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1 Abu'l Hasan, *Jahangir Entertains Shah Abbas*, c. 1620. Washington, DC: Freer and Sackler Galleries.

a surface in a straight line, a circle, or a square. Their movements were driven by a collection of gears, wheels, and springs that were assembled by a clockmaker, and they were typically wound up by someone in a position of power. Automata were almost exclusively crafted in the city of Augsburg and were frequently commissioned by German-speaking emperors, electors, bishops, and dukes.[2]

The *Diana Automaton* was a type that was used during courtly feasts.[3] The fact that over twenty of these silver-gilt objects survive testifies to their popularity among European nobility. Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II (1552–1612) kept a wax model of a version of the *Diana Automaton* at his imperial palace in Prague – presumably so that new

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2 Detail of Abu'l Hasan, *Jahangir Entertains Shah Abbas*, c. 1620.

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automata could be swiftly crafted for large feasts and presented as diplomatic gifts – and Amalia van Solms (1602–75), the wife of Fredrick Henry, Prince of Orange and Stadhouder of the Netherlands, owned a *Diana Automaton*.[4] Typically, *Diana Automata* were used in drinking games. The head of the stag was removed and filled with wine. Once

3 Attributed to Joachim Friess, *Diana Automaton*, c. 1610. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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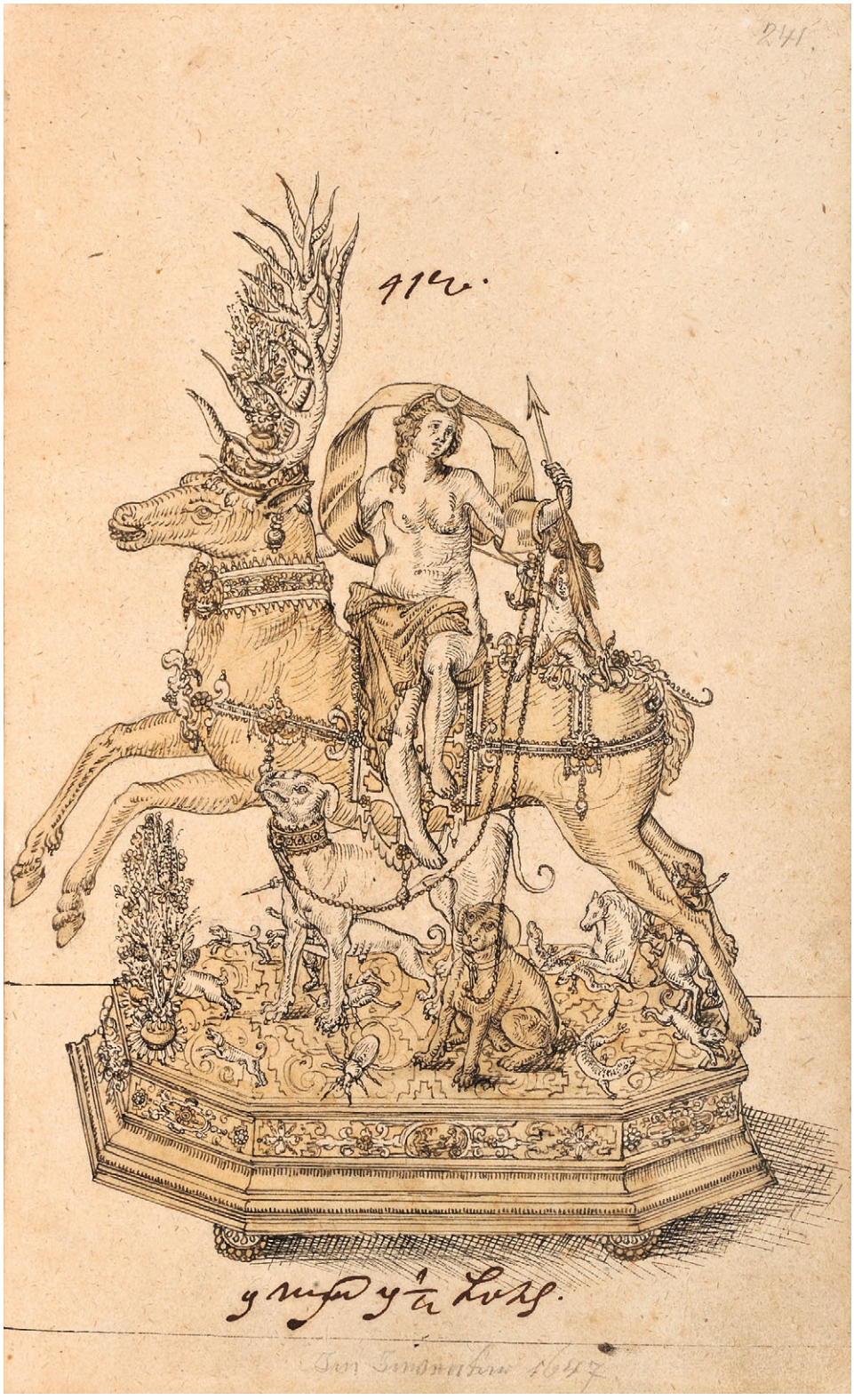

4 Unknown artist, *Diana Automaton*, drawing from the inventory of the Lobokowicz Kunstkammer, c. 1650. Prague: Lobokowicz Collection.

filled, the automaton was wound and set down on a table. The individual before whom the object stopped was then compelled to drink its contents. Most of the surviving *Diana Automata* were programmed to move in a circle roughly 76 cm in diameter.[5]

The *Diana Automaton* portrays a rather unconventional version of the myth of Diana and Actaeon. The basic plot of the myth, which is a tale of a chance encounter

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gone horribly wrong, unfolds in the following way: while out stag hunting with his hounds, Actaeon, a mortal, stumbles upon the goddess Diana bathing in the company of her nymphs. Surprised, the nymphs are unable to shield Diana from Actaeon's gaze. Infuriated by her exposure, Diana transforms Actaeon into a stag, and he is immediately torn limb from limb by his dogs, who no longer recognize him. From antiquity onward, the typical moment of the myth depicted by artists was the onset of Actaeon's metamorphosis from a man into a stag.[6]

The *Diana Automaton* departs from the myth and previous depictions of it. In a representative example of the *Diana Automaton* type from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a golden Actaeon, figured as a stag and surrounded by his hounds, leaps over an array of small cast-silver lizards and toads, while a half-clad silver Diana with gold hair, accompanied by a putto, sits sideways on Actaeon's back (see *plate* 3). She braces herself by gripping his neck with her right hand, while her left hand holds an arrow poised to be plunged into his rump. Here Actaeon's punishment has been transformed from a death sentence into an unknown fate to be meted out by the Goddess. In the *Diana Automaton*, Actaeon has not just been reshaped into the prey he sought; he has also lost his freedom. The armed and bare-breasted goddess not only rides him but has also saddled and harnessed him, and has leashed his hounds. Moreover, unlike earlier depictions in painting or sculpture, this Diana is not mortified by her nakedness. Her body is laid bare for the viewer, and, as a result, the viewer becomes a voyeur, like Actaeon himself. But the object engages the viewer still further. Since the automaton requires that Actaeon's head be removed to drink the wine it contains, the viewer actually becomes the agent of Actaeon's dismemberment. All of these qualities of the automaton: its role in plying the viewer with drink; its departure from the standard myth; its display of the naked body of the goddess; its placement of the viewer in the role of Actaeon's destroyer; and, most of all, its ability to move of its own accord suggest how it accrued social and aesthetic value at courts across Northern Europe. To understand that the concept of mobility was crucial to the object's appeal, one need only consult a drawing of a *Diana Automaton* that appears in an inventory of the Lobokowicz Kunstkammer (*plate* 4). The drawing exaggerates the automaton's wheel carriage in order to signal the fact that it could traverse surfaces. In addition, the artist has amplified the suggestion that the object is in motion by adding a billowing veil that not only frames the goddess's face but also flutters in the air as if swelled by wind. The image attempts to reanimate the automaton by depicting the visual properties of movement.

This type of automaton also held appeal farther afield, at the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Evidence of the presence of a *Diana Automaton* at the Mughal court is offered by *Jahangir entertains Abbas*. The primary subject of the painting is an encounter between the Emperor Jahangir, pictured at the top left, and the Safavid ruler Shah 'Abbas I, seated next to him on a divan. Below these two rulers are Jahangir's faithful attendants: Asaf Khan, Jahangir's brother-in-law and one of his principal advisers, stands before the Emperor, and Khan 'Alam, Jahangir's chief falconer and ambassador to the Safavid court, is situated before Abbas, conspicuously displaying a *Diana Automaton* in his left hand. How did this automaton reach Mughal India? How was it received and interpreted in this new political and cultural context?

Automata on the Move

Automata are early modern objects that were doubly mobile. They moved themselves and they were circulated around the globe by European rulers, diplomats, merchants, and missionaries. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the individuals who

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orchestrated the objects' global movement placed a bet on automata. The gamble was this: that automata would be understood, appreciated, and desired by foreign rulers and high-ranking officials, and that the objects' technological sophistication and fine craftsmanship would, in turn, speak to technological acumen of their place of origin – in most cases the Holy Roman Empire. Once set in motion, automata were objects that were believed to, on the one hand, transcend cultural, linguistic, and religious differences, and, on the other, reaffirm and reinscribe them.[7] As such, automata that travelled, like the *Diana Automaton*, were caught up in a play of overwhelming forces that prompted their global mobility. The journey of automata from Europe to foreign locations was not a simple conveyance from one point to another, but a peregrination that is marked by the objects' appearance in one place,

5 Hans Schlotheim, *The Mechanical Galleon*, c. 1583. London: British Museum.

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disappearance, and then a reappearance in a new location, with the space and time in between unaccounted for. Accordingly, the stories of their mobility unfold more like a montage than a linear narrative. Indeed, the automata that travelled from the Holy Roman Empire to India appear in textual and visual records like flashes on a screen.

It may come as a surprise to learn that German mercantile families from Augsburg – notably the Fuggers – funded the majority of Portuguese expeditions to India during the first three-quarters of the sixteenth century.[8] They did so to acquire trading rights and tax exemptions on pepper, spices, and gems.[9] Portugal entered into these contracts because the crown's funds had been severely depleted by wars in North Africa and expeditions along the western coast of Africa. As a consequence of this economic relationship, German agents went to India to oversee the acquisition, storage, and shipment of commodities back to Europe. While in India these German agents developed side businesses trafficking German printed materials and curiosities to the subcontinent.[10] Letters, news, prints, books, and luxury goods from the German-speaking world travelled overland along a route that spanned over 8,000 kilometers and stretched from Augsburg to Venice, to Aleppo, Baghdad, Ormuz, and then on to Goa. In the 1580s, the route was extended to Macao.[11] By 1590 the entire overland communication network was organized and overseen by Ferdinand Cron (1554–1637) of Augsburg.[12] Cron travelled to Goa in 1588 as a trade agent for the Fuggers, and by 1591, when the Fuggers terminated a contract with the Portuguese crown, he began trading independently in European and Asian luxury goods, gems, and intelligence.[13]

While in Goa, Cron made contacts with a number of merchants who dealt directly with the Mughal Court, the most important of whom was the Flemish jeweller Jacques de Coutre. In 1619 de Coutre left Goa for Agra, the seat of Jahangir's court, with gifts for the emperor and his son Prince Khurram (1592–1666). The gifts included the following: three large cameos (unfortunately they are not described); a square piece of white jasper inlaid with lapis lazuli from Punjab; a Florentine *pietra dura* plaque representing the Archangel Michael soaring over a demon-infested hell; a pair of sheathed daggers; gold chains; and an automaton of a ship from Augsburg.[14] The ship may have resembled a three-masted, silver-gilt automaton of a galleon that was produced in numbers in the Holy Roman Empire in the late sixteenth century (*plate 5*).[15]

De Coutre was not the first to bring an automaton to the Mughal court. Already in 1595, the Jesuit Jerome Xavier (1549–1617), great nephew of Francis Xavier (1506–52) and the lead missionary of a Jesuit mission to the Mughal court, wrote to the Father Provincial in Goa and pleaded, 'For the love of God, send us some good pictures on paper which depict stories such as the life of Christ our Lord, or some Saints, and some *curious* objects which we will give to the King.'[16] The Father Provincial delivered. A year later, Jerome tells us the Jesuits not only procured and displayed a Christmas Crib during the Christmas Feast, but they also supplemented it with the following:

> ... an ape which squirted water from its eyes and mouth, and above it a bird which sang mysteriously ... and a globe of the world supported on the backs of two elephants ... and above this a large portrait of King [Jahangir] which he sent us when he was a prince ... and next to this figure was placed a large mirror at the front of the crib ... [At the gates] were the Angel, Gabriel, with many angels, who were accompanied by placards proclaiming '*Glory to God*' or '*Be not afraid*' in Persian. Around the Holy Infant in the crib were some sayings of the Prophets who pretold the coming of God into the World.[17]

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Although space does not permit an analysis of the monkey that spat or the bird that sang, what is of interest is that this tableau contained such automata. Additional examples survive of automata and clockwork objects distributed around Asia from Goa. In 1582 the Father Provincial of Goa presented the Jesuit China mission, led by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), with a clock intended for the governor-generals in the southeastern provinces of Guandong and Guangxi. It is not unlikely that when the Father Provincial vested Ricci with the clocks, he also sent a clockmaker to Macao with Ricci. In the spring of 1584, Ricci notes that he was constructing clocks with 'a canary islander who came from India, black-skinned'.[18] Thirty-four years later Nicholas Trigault (1577–1628), the Flemish Jesuit Ambassador of the China mission, was dispatched from Goa with an elaborate and complex mechanized nativity scene that was intended for the Chinese Emperor Wan-Li.[19]

Medial Movement

How the *Diana Automaton* depicted in the Freer painting made its way to the Mughal Court remains unclear. It could have easily arrived as a token of diplomatic good will from Shah 'Abbas, who is featured in the Freer painting; as an object brought by Jesuit missionaries; or as a piece of merchandise from a merchant or a mercantile firm, interested in establishing or maintaining a relationship with the Mughal court. It cannot go unremarked, though, that in a 1616 report addressing officers in the East India Company about gifts to send Jahangir, Sir Thomas Roe (1581–1644), the English Ambassador to the Mughal Court, stated: 'Diana this year gave great content', suggesting that he may have presented a *Diana Automaton* to the Mughal Emperor.[20]

The principal evidence of Jahangir's appreciation for the *Diana Automaton* is the Freer painting. Jahangir and Abbas, whom Jahangir called 'a brother' even though they never met, are joined here in an idealized encounter that underscores their amity and equal standing.[21] Beneath a celestial hemisphere supported by two cherubs and symmetrical banks of clouds, the painting's figures and objects are hierarchically arranged against a sky-like background. A shaded area marks the ground at the foot of the divan on which Jahangir and Abbas sit and before which their attendants, Asaf Khan and Khan 'Alam, stand. Persian verses emphasizing the rulers' harmonious relations appear above and below the scene in cartouches. They read as follows:

> When the Emperor Jahangir and Shah 'Abbas, two felicitous kings and shadows of God, take to Jamshed's cup, they sit next to each other in fortune. The world flourishes through their justice, and the people of the world are at peace. Friend and brother are worthy of each other. O God, may they enjoy the fruits of each other in good fortune.[22]

The Mughal and Persian emperors are joined here to 'take to Jamshed's cup'. This is a reference to a cup of divination, an emblem of wisdom and power.

Whereas Jamshed's cup is not present, many other objects are, the provenances of which have been identified and discussed in two respective studies of the painting by Richard Ettinghausen and Sharon Littlefield.[23] The black pedestal table with gold edging, the white ewer, and the two large vessels on the table are most likely Italian; the transparent wine glass looks Venetian; the small brown teacup adorned with a flowering plum branch appears Chinese; the two golden objects in the right and left lower foreground resemble Portuguese liturgical objects; the black trays containing fruit are probably made of Japanese lacquer. The gold cup, saucer, and vessel Asaf Khan holds look as though they were crafted in Iran, and Khan 'Alam, the chief

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6 Bichtir, *Jahangir preferring a Sufi Shaikh over King James I of England*, c. 1620 Washington, DC: Freer and Sackler Galleries.

falconer at the Mughal Court and the ambassador to the Safavids, presents a falcon on his gloved right hand and cradles the German automaton of Diana, the Roman Goddess of the hunt, in his left. These objects, all of them exogenous to the Mughal court, most likely came to the court through a variety of channels – diplomatic, mercantile, and religious.[24]

Existing interpretations of this image explain the presence of the *Diana Automaton* as a reference to Jahangir's interest in exotic curiosities.[25] This idea seems supported by its presence among the other objects, all of which are given special treatment. The Venetian glass is transparent. The plum branch on the diminutive Chinese teacup is legible. Flowers and flourishes that adorn the two tall golden Italian vessels are made apparent. In addition to rendering the particularities of the objects, the maker of the image has artfully arranged their display. The black Italian table with its clearly rendered gold edging, centrally placed, functions as a pedestal for these objects. To the left and right of the table, and echoing its top and base in shape and colour, are the two lacquer plates filled with fruit. Laid out with food as if for the viewer, the three plates between the two lacquer dishes rhyme in shape and size. The two Portuguese liturgical objects in the bottom corners also seem to mirror each other: their bases, stems, and finials are all quite similar, and their gold chains are carefully splayed out toward the centre of the image. An analogous formal relationship is created between the white ewer on the table and the white falcon perched on Khan 'Alam's right hand: the spout of the ewer and the beak of the bird parallel each other. Another reverberation is present between the vessel Asaf Khan grips with his left hand and the long-necked multi-coloured vessel on the table, as well as between the cup in his right hand and the Chinese teacup situated on its diagonal.

The *Diana Automaton*, like the other exotic objects, is sharply rendered. Diana is clearly shown seated on the back of Acteaon, and the artist has attempted to approximate the object's silver-gilt colour if not its sheen. Yet the automaton stands apart from the other objects depicted in the painting. Its form is not repeated anywhere in the image. More importantly, it is the only figural object present in the painting, and it has been brought together in the hands of Khan 'Alam with a second figural element – the falcon. Arguably, the *Diana Automaton*, by representing the Roman goddess of the hunt, may be intended to serve as an attribute of Khan 'Alam as much as an emblem of foreign origin, identifying him as chief falconer of the Mughal Court.[26] This recognition of Greco-Roman mythology at an Indian court should come as no surprise. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Indian court artists and patrons were fluent in this type of imagery. This was partly due to the circulation of European prints at the Mughal court as well as the presence of Dutch artists in the region, the most renowned of whom was Cornelis Claesz Heda, who established himself as a court painter to Sultan Ibrahim'Adil Shah II (1556–1627).[27] Less well-known Dutch artists have been identified at the Mughal court during the same period, although, according to Sanjay Subrahmanyam, their activity has proved difficult to trace.[28]

If, on one level, the depiction of the automaton in the Freer painting registers a shared concept across Germano-Indian cultural spheres – Diana as a signifier of the hunt – the appropriation of this object in the painting also suggests new meanings and values.[29] At European courts the *Diana Automaton* was valued, foremost, because it moved of its own accord. Recall the drawing from the Lobokowicz Kunstkammer in which the anonymous artist attempted to convey that the object was in motion. The drawing did this in spite of the fact that the artist had to translate the silver-gilt three-dimensional form into a black and white two-dimensional image. To make up for the lack that occurred in this shift in medium, the artist supplemented the image

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of the object by dropping the wheel carriage down, enlarging the wheels, and adding a soaring piece of drapery.

The depiction of the automaton in the Freer painting, in which a similar medial shift occurs (albeit this time in paint), makes no reference to the fact that the object could move of its own accord. It is not placed on a surface. There are no wheels. Abul' Hasan has not amended the automaton in any way. In fact, the automaton figured in the Freer painting has been reduced of its supplemental figures – Actaeon's hounds or cupid are no longer visible. Only the figure of the huntress Diana on the stag is given pride of place. And like the falcon (the object of the hunt) in the ambassador's right hand, its motion is arrested, the ability to move of its own accord denied. In the context of the Freer painting, the *Diana Automaton*'s value is determined by its foreign origin, its primary subject matter, and that subject matter's relationship to the figure presenting it. This is no longer an object used to facilitate the inebriation of guests at a courtly feast – an act of metamorphosis in and of itself. Instead, the automaton's social and aesthetic value has been transformed, and this transformation occurred as result of its global mobility.

In the literature on transcultural exchange, cultural and art historians often employ hybridity as an explanatory metaphor for coming to terms with objects that, like the *Diana Automaton*, lack a stable identity as a result of their transcultural lives.[30] Hybridity is a complex concept, to be sure, first formulated by Homi Bhabha and then reiterated by postcolonial scholarship, which has contributed to the sustained vibrancy of the term for analytic purposes. For Bhabha and others, it has been particularly useful when addressing the ever-shifting subjectivities of actors in historical contexts in which the recognition of power between two or multiple cultures was far from mutual.[31] Within this discourse, hybridity is typically understood to be an outgrowth of European colonial expansion. More recently, the term hybridity has been used to highlight the melodic nature of all cultures and their by-products, even if, as consequence of time, appropriation, and naturalization, that intermixture on a macro and micro scale is imperceptible. This type of hybridity is seen to be the consequence of people and things that travelled, which promoted the mixing and interaction of cultures, and is based on the premise that a single culture is rarely if ever entirely isolated.[32] Here, mobility is constitutive of culture and its effervescence. The philologist Sheldon Pollock takes up the now widely accepted position on the ubiquity of hybridity: 'there exist', he writes, 'no cultural agents who are not always-already transcultured … the cultural materials being transferred are already hybrid themselves; and like the transmitter the receiver culture too is something always in process and not a thing with an essence.'[33]

While I agree that objects and persons who cross cultural borders confound definition and are always in process, I am less inclined to use the term hybrid in this case, when the concept of metamorphosis seems more apt. Although the *Diana Automaton* does not overtly represent metamorphosis in process, the myth of Diana and Actaeon – a myth about an encounter and the transformation of one thing into another in space and time – embodies the essential themes of metamorphosis and, as a result, is useful for thinking about metamorphosis as a metaphor for describing objects with transcultural lives. It is not just that the *Diana Automaton* meant one thing in Europe and another at the Mughal court. The object itself was different; it had achieved a kind of cosmopolitanism – the power to be at home in two different places.

What place do exotic objects occupy in other Mughal paintings of the same period? *Jahangir preferring a Sufi Shaikh over King James I of England* (*plate 6*), a painting by

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the Mughal court artist Bichitr' from 1622, evidences transformations of European objects not unlike that in *Jahangir entertains Shah Abbas*.[34] The image reproduces a portrait of the English King James I painted by John de Critz. The portrait is given alongside representations of Jahangir, an Ottoman Sultan, the Sufi Shaikh Husayn Ajmiri, a self-portrait of the artist, four putti, a European textile, a European two-headed figurine, and an hourglass of European origin. The entire painting revolves around the hourglass, placed centre stage. No longer is this a small timepiece used to divide the day into parts, as water clocks did at the Mughal court.[35] Monumental in its scale, the hourglass doubles as Jahangir's dais, his seat of power, and, by way of its trickling sand, a sign of the emperor's presence in the past, present, and future.

One of the winged figures, hovering above the base of the timepiece, amplifies this motif of time by writing out on the base a wish that Jahangir live for a thousand years.[36] The hourglass's fragility, as a thing made of glass, is denied in the painting. Rather it implausibly supports Jahangir, who has climbed to his seat from a small stool depicting the figure of a two-headed man – a tradition in accordance with Mughal 'concepts to have demons, angels, or subject people carry the imperial seat'.[37] Like the *Diana Automaton*, which serves as an identifying marker of Khan 'Alam in *Jahangir entertains Abbas*, the hourglass, a transcultural object that was brought to the Mughal court from afar, has been resized and repurposed to convey something – in this case Jahangir's ever-presence – about the identity of a crucial figure in the image. The hourglass, through its figurative and literal translation, has become something else. To consider this representation of the hourglass as a hybrid object is to ignore its new identity in this Mughal context.

Thinking about Movement

Hybridization and metamorphosis are conceptually linked, but they differ in crucial ways.[38] Hybridity can potentially carry a problematic racial freight by entailing the seamless fusion, or joining, of two opposing identities. In metamorphosis, however, identities remain in flux. The dynamic of metamorphosis depends on the continual oscillation, or potential for oscillation, between states. Actaeon is both man and deer: 'all changed except his mind'.[39] Metamorphosis and hybridization also differ in terms of their chronicity. The notion of hybridity assumes simultaneity, while metamorphosis is sequential – much like the rhetorical self-presentation of an automaton or an hourglass, which unfold in time.[40] Metamorphosis encompasses multiple states of transition, alteration, and transformation. A passage from Ovid offers a radiant parallel. Nestled in his account of Arachne and Minerva, the poet describes the two women working deftly at spinning, dyeing, and weaving to produce a range of colours: 'As when after a storm of rain the sun's rays strike through, and a rainbow, with its huge curve, stains the wide sky, though a thousand different colors shine in it, the eye cannot detect the change from each one to the next; so like appear the adjacent colors, but the extremes are plainly different.'[41]

Hybridity has been a useful term to throw into relief the fiction of pure identity, to denote mixing and uncertainty, to describe an aesthetic that cannot be identified as local, and, as Dana Leibsohn and Carolyn Dean have demonstrated in their pioneering essay 'Hybridity and its discontents', to delineate instances when foreign 'things and practices are brought together that in some way challenge presumptive norms'.[42] In other words, hybridity can be helpful in illuminating and throwing into question normative assumptions and practices. Accordingly, hybridity maintains a strong conceptual hold on scholarship that deals with the transcultural flows of objects and images.[43] Yet despite its explanatory power, scholars, including Leibsohn

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and Dean, have also pointed to the shortcomings of the concept.[44] In adding my voice to this chorus, I hope to bring to the fore the way in which the notion of hybridity collapses the temporal, spatial, and transformative dimensions of cultural contact. This short essay has proposed that metamorphosis better captures what happens when, as a result of global mobility and cultural re-contextualization, objects and images acquire a new significance, and sometimes a radically new one.

There is one additional sense in which metamorphosis is analytically useful. Crucially, unlike hybridity, it does not replicate the concept it opposes.[45] To put it another way, metamorphosis does not imply the coexistence of homogeneous, monological, and stable cultures that are incommensurable. Instead it underscores the elusiveness of unified cultural entities.[46] Like Ovid's stained heavens, it reflects a world that is fluid: the extremes are plainly different, but often the eye cannot detect difference among the adjacent components of the whole. By analyzing the adaptation, refraction, and assimilation of the *Diana Automaton* in *Jahangir entertains Abbas*, this essay has attempted to demonstrate that the transfer and re-contextualization of objects from one culture to another is generative. While initially productive in pointing to the ways in which pure identity is artificial, hybridity forecloses the possibility of discerning or discovering something radically new, because it narrows our intellectual referents. Metamorphosis, by contrast, allows for a vital, mutable world of meaning.

Notes

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1 Jeremiah P. Lotsy, 'Abu'l Hasan', in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, Bombay, 1991, 81; Amina Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court*, trans. D. Dusinberre, New York, 1992, 54–5 and 170–5; Gauvin Alexander Bailey, 'The end of the "Catholic Era" in Mughal Painting: Jahangir's Dream pictures, English painting, and the Renaissance frontispiece', *Marg*, 53: 2, 2001, 46–59; Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'Conceit of the globe in Mughal visual practice', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 49: 4, 2007, 754–78; and Francesca von Habsburg, ed., *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa': Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures from the Sixteenth through the Eighteenth Century and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy by 'Imad al-Hasani*, Milan, 1996, 114.

2 Jessica Keating, 'The machinations of German court culture: Early modern automata', PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 2010.

3 Lorenz Seelig and Joaneath Spicer, 'Die Gruppe der Diana auf dem Hirsch in der Walters Art Gallery', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 49/50, 1991–2, 107–18.

4 I thank Claudia Swan for notifying me about *Diana Automaton* in the inventory of von Sohm's collection. On Rudolph's wax model see *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, 23, 1905, XXX no. 491.

5 Seelig and Spicer, 'Die Gruppe der Diana', 108.

6 Leonard Barkan, 'Diana and Actaeon: The myth as synthesis', *English Literary Renaissance*, 10, Autumn 1980, 345.

7 Keating, The Machinations of German Court Culture, 116–51.

8 The Fuggers were the leading patriciate family of Augsburg. Throughout the sixteenth century their trading and banking enterprises dominated not only the German-speaking world, but Europe at large. The literature on the Fuggers is vast. For a recent overview see Mark Häberlein, *The Fuggers of Augsburg: Pursuing Wealth and Honor in Renaissance Germany*, Charlottesville, NC, 2012.

9 Peter Geffcken, 'Die Welser und ihr Handel 1246–1496', in Mark Häberlein and Johannes Burkhardt, eds, *Die Welser: Neue Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des oberdeutschen Handelshauses*, Berlin, 2002, 27–167.

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